

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00957 240606Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /058 W
-----240608 022632 /15

R 230930Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3637
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, BG
SUBJ: SHAHEED (MARTYRS') DAY IN BANGLADESH; MANY ARRESTED

REF: 76 DACCA 6076

1. THE 21ST OF FEBRUARY, THE DAY IN 1975 WHEN SEVERAL DACCA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE KILLED IN A POLICE FIRING WHILE PROTESTING THE STATUS OF URDU AS THE SOLE NATIONAL LANGUAGE OF PAKISTAN, WAS OBSERVED IN A SOLEMN AND PEACEFUL MANNER MONDAY THROUGHOUT BANGLADESH. THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS FILED PAST THE CENTRAL SHAHEED MINAR (MARTYRS' MONUMENT), GENERAL ZIA AND OTHER TOP OFFICIALS GAVE SPEECHES THERE COMMEMORATING THE OCCASION, AND EX-FREEDOM FIGHTERS, STUDENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS LAID FLORAL WREATHS AT THE MONUMENT.

2. WE HAD HEARD THAT SEVERAL STUDENT GROUPS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE BANGLADESH CHATTRO LEAGUE (THE JSD STUDENT FRONT) HAD PLANNED A DEMONSTRATION AT THE MINAR MONDAY TO PROTEST THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF SIRAJUL ALAM KHAN AND
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OTHER TOP JSD LEADERS. (REFTEL). WHEN THE DCM AND POLOFF PRESENTED THE EMBASSY WREATH MONDAY MORNING, NO SIGN OF STUDENT TROUBLE WAS OBSERVED. ON THE CONTRARY, THE PROCESSION, SUPERVISED BY TRAFFIC POLICE AND BOY SCOUTS, FILED QUIETLY PAST THE MONUMENT. HOWEVER, DACCA PRESS REPORTED AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF ARRESTS, THE FIGURE RANGING FROM 25 TO OVER 70 ACCORDING TO WHICH PUBLICATION ONE READS.

MOST OF THOSE ARRESTED WERE CHARGED WITH RAISING "OBJECTION-
ABLE SLOGANS" AND DISTRIBUTING "OBJECTIONABLE
LEAFLETS". ONLY THREE PEOPLE WERE IDENTIFIED SPECIFICALLY
FOR POSSESSION OF A BANGLADESH CHATTRO LEAGUE (JSD BANNER.
REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES INDICATE THERE WERE SLOGANS AND
SOME PLACARDS SUPPORTING MUJIB, OPPOSING ZIA AND TAKING A
PRO-AWAMI LEAGUE STANCE. THESE, RATHER THAN JSD, SEEM TO
HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR CAUSES FOR ARRESTS.

3. COMMENT: THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS SUGGESTS THAT THE POLICE
MADE A PREEMPTIVE MOVE TO AVOID TROUBLE, BUT IT IS OUR
IMPRESSION THAT THE CITY WOULD HAVE BEEN QUET REGARDLESS.
MANY OF THOSE ARRESTED HAVE BEEN RELEASED.
MASTERS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARRESTS, PARTY LEADERS, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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